

USAF: Tribal leaders visit 366th Wing

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MOUNTAIN HOME AIR FORCE BASE, Idaho (AFNS) -- Mountain Home AFB was host to a rare visit July 28 from two influential Native Americans.

James Paiva and Dennis Smith, the chairman and vice chairman, respectively, of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley Reservation, Idaho, continue to be instrumental in maintaining a close relationship between the wing and neighboring tribes as part of ongoing government-to-government relations. The two met with wing leaders and organization representatives on a variety of issues.

For Brig. Gen. Mark Schmidt, 366th Wing commander, it was the first time he hosted the two here, although he has previously visited Duck Valley to speak with tribal representatives.

"It was an honor for me to host these two leaders from the sovereign tribal governments," the general said. "Mutual respect between our culture and theirs is essential in continuing a positive relationship."

One of the concerns discussed was the effects from military aircraft flights and possible impact on the reservation, which lies under the local airspace used by wing aircrews. Since the early 1980's, explained Schmidt, the wing has continuously lessened the effects on Duck Valley by placing restrictions on flight operations.

Unless there is a "compelling national security circumstance," military contingency or hostilities, these restrictions include the following:

- No supersonic flight over the reservation.
- No flare use at night at any altitude or flare use during the day below 20,000 feet above ground level over the reservation.
- No chaff use over the reservation.
- No flying at any altitude within five nautical miles of the town of Owyhee except during emergencies.
- No flying below 15,000 AGL over the reservation.

Schmidt also assured the two representatives that wing pilots take these restrictions seriously, and any verified infractions are dealt with quickly and severely. Since wing people investigate all noise complaints, Paiva and Smith discussed the process with airfield management and operations group officials.

The wing has also offered the tribes the use of an Air Force measurement system -- a Boom Event Analyzer Recorder -- to be placed at Duck Valley to monitor sonic booms.

Paiva and Smith promised to talk with the tribal council about the best place to install the monitoring and measurement device.

Other issues discussed during the visit included recruiting teachers for the reservation's schools who are sensitive to the cultural importance of Native American heritage, interface with wing medical people, the Enhanced Training in Idaho proposal and the annual holiday toy program organized by the wing. (Courtesy of Air Combat Command News Service)

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